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SUBJECT: DOMINICAN ELECTIONS #33: BALAGUER'S GHOST

[1](#)1. (SBU) Following is no. 33 in our series on the Dominican elections:

Balaguer's Ghost

Avaunt! And quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which thou dost glare with.

- - Macbeth, Act 3, scene 4

The message that Embassy Santo Domingo has been picking up most strongly about the May 16 elections is that of a pervasive but diffuse fear of
For example:

Influential, sophisticated business executives have told the Ambassador apparently in all sincerity that if the ruling PRD wins this election, Provincial PLD leaders speak with great anxiety about claims of Mejia,s faction distributing guns to party members so they can disrupt polling
Last week a senior PRSC official in Barahona evoked repeatedly his worry that "phantom" polling centers would be created by the National Electi
We earlier reported the paranoid notions of supporters of the PLD's single national senator, Tomas Perez, who asserted that the PRD-dominated C
And on March 26 PRD President Vicente Sanchez Baret formally complained to the Elections Board (JCE), seeking to block the PLD from setting up
And yet - -

The JCE will be using an improved version of election procedures that functioned successfully in 1996 and 2000; representatives of each party w
The Ghost

Joaquin Balaguer died in 2002, a scant two years after he declined to enter a presidential second round against Hipolito Mejia's 49% score, but
In a country rife with corruption and pursuit of spoils, they argue, only an absolute prohibition of re-election gives any hope of clearing out
Hipolito Mejia's railroading tactics have only reinforced these views. He used his heavy PRD majority in Congress and (assert many) both arm-tw
In our view, Mejia believes he has a good shot at actually winning these elections if he can succeed in pushing them into a second round. Part
Spreading out, multiplying forces

This atmosphere and disposition of forces does much to explain Leonel Fernandez,s insistent requests in Washington, publicly and privately, for
Even so, memories of rotten elections remain very close to the surface. Despite the recent campaign managers, agreement to program public event
Irregularities or unforeseen clashes could slip into local violence in the 50 days that remain before the vote.

During that time Embassy officers are traveling repeatedly to provincial capitals in a systematic initiative to establish contacts with the maj
But Balaguer,s ghost is still very much with them. In fact, reporters from the "Diario Libre" newspaper confirmed that dead though he may be, t

[1](#)2. (U) Drafted by Michael Meigs.

[1](#)3. (U) This report and others in our elections series are available on the SIPRNET at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/index.cfm> s
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